Mr. ADAMS's

SERMON

BEFORE THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

November 5th, 1696.

Veneris, *Sexto Die* Novemb. 1696.

ORdered, *That the Thanks of This House be Given to* Mr. Adams, *For the Sermon by him Preached before This House Yesterday at St.* Margaret's Westminster: *And that he be Desired to Print the same: And, That* Mr. Rowney *and* Mr. Harcourt *do Aquaint him therewith.*

Paul Jodrell. *Cler. Dom. Com.*

6-21.16

A

SERMON

Preached before the

HONOURABLE HOUSE

OF

COMMONS,

AT

St. *Margarets Westminster*,

November the Fifth, 1696.

BY

J. Adams, Rector of St. *Alban Woodstreet*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

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A SERMON

Preach'd before the

HONOURABLE HOUSE

OF

COMMONS, &c.

3 cap. DANIEL 28. V.

Then Nebuchadnezzar ſpake and ſaid; Bleſſed be the God of Shadrach, Meſhec and Abednego, who hath ſent his Angel, and delivered his Servants that truſted in him; and have changed the Kings word, and yielded their Bodys, that they might not ſerve nor worſhip any God, except their own God.

THE Occaſion of theſe Words muſt be too well known to be Repeated in all its Circumſtances. *Nebuchadnezzar* being Return'd from a Victorious Expedition which he had made into *Egypt*;

Vain

Vain upon his Succeſs, and therefore forgetful of his Dream, and *Daniel*'s Interpretation of it, or perhaps, in Contempt of both, ſets up an Idol near *Babylon*, and makes a Decree, That whoever did not Worſhip it ſhould be burnt alive.

But theſe Three *Jews* refuſing to do ſo, and perſiſting in their Refuſal with a Holy Conſtancy, he falls into a Rage, commands that the Furnace ſhould be made Seven times hotter, and that they ſhould be thrown into it immediately.

But, How vain is the Raſhneſs of ſucceſsful Pride! or the cruelty of boundleſs Power! when oppos'd againſt the God of Heaven and Earth, and when employ'd againſt ſuch as Truſt in him; He ſends his Angel and delivers them, and this Miracle turns their Enemies Heart; makes him acknowledge his Errour and their Virtue in that *They yielded their Bodys, and chang'd his word*; Expos'd themſelves to Death, and made him change his Opinion, upon their wonderful Deliverance, and join with them in the Praiſe of the only God.

I heartily wiſh, That they who have exceeded the Cruelty of this King, in ſo many barbarous Conſpiracies againſt this Nation, would but imitate him in this laſt particular, and be mov'd by the Wonders of our Deliverances, to confeſs their Errour, and to *Give God the Glory.*

But alas! We are not like to find anything of this:

this: The same Spirit which they were of when they engag'd in that Bloody Enterprise, from which our Fore-Fathers were Deliver'd this Day, is still working; and tho it breaks out now and then, like subterraneous Fires, and Disappears again, is not Extinguish'd; nor like to be so (while Ambition or Superstition will be still supplying new Fewel) but with the General Conflagration.

This makes this Solemnity necessary upon a double Account, not only to make us Grateful for what we have receiv'd, but to make us Watchful against the same Dangers hereafter.

In order to both, I shall Discourse of these Words in this manner.

1. I shall consider the particular Cause of the great Danger which these Men were brought into, namely, *For that they would not serve nor worship any God except their own God.*

2. I shall examine the Pretences of Religious cruelty, not only as to such extreams, but also, as to any kind of Violence offer'd to our fellow Christians, upon the account of Christianity; and shew, that this is proportionably unjust and unreasonable.

3. I shall make some Reflections upon these *Jews* Deliverance, and Compare our own with it.

And having said something upon each of these, shall conclude all with the Duty of Thanksgiving, which is the Design of these words, and the Business of this Day.

1. I

1. I am to consider the particular Cause, for which these Men were brought into this great Danger; namely, for that they would *not serve nor worship any God except their own God*; But the Injustice of requiring this of them must appear at the first Glance; because it was not only contrary to Natural Reason, but also to that Law which God himself had Reveal'd to their fore-Fathers.

There is no one that has any Conception of God, but must allow him to be Infinite in all his Attributes. But Infinity implys Unity; there cannot be more than one All-Mighty or All-Wise; than one first Cause of all things; or, than one Supream Governour of them all. Therefore, if this Being is but one; Divine Worship must be due to Him alone: To give it to any other Object, would be the making that, God; and not only the most provoking Affront to the Great Creator, but the Confusion of all Belief, and the Corruption of all Morality.

This made God forbid the *Jews* the serving any of the Gods of the Neighbouring Nations, under such severe Penalties, upon any pretences of Miracles whatsoever; particularly, 13 *Deut.* 1, &c. *If there arise among you a Prophet, and give a Sign or Wonder to entice you to serve other Gods, and it shall come to pass, thou shalt not hearken to the words of that Prophet; but he shall be put*

to

to Death. If thy Brother, thy Son, thy Daughter, the Wife of thy Boſom, or thy Friend which is as thy own Soul, entice thee ſecretly, ſaying, Let us ſerve other Gods; thou ſhalt not ſpare nor conceal him, but thou ſhalt ſurely kill him. Since this then, was not only againſt Reaſon, but Revelation: Since God by ſo many Prohibitions, Cautions and Threats, prov'd Himſelf to be *Jealous* in this Particular; the refuſal of theſe *Jews* was not only Lawful, but highly Commendable, and the Death they were Expos'd to, upon this Account, Barbarous and Unjuſt.

It cannot be deny'd, but the Dangers which this Nation has been Expos'd to ſo often; from open Violence, but more from baſeſt Treachery, has been upon this very account. One of the greateſt Differences which we have with the Church of *Rome* is, becauſe *we will not ſerve nor worſhip any God except our own God.* This is one of the moſt profitable Abſurdities that is ſhelter'd under Infallibility. And therefore our Refuſing of it, and the Reaſons why we do ſo, always provoke them in the higheſt manner, and makes them fly to Cruelties inſtead of Arguments: As if Image-Worſhip could not be ſupported, any other way than by the ſame Barbarities that it was brought in at firſt.

But the Obligations we have to continue in this Refuſal with unſhaken Conſtancy, are greater

than these *Jews* had, as Rising not only from the Laws of Nature, and of *Moses*, (which is still in force, as to this particular): But also from the Law of Christ: The Merits of his Death, the Prerogative of His Intercession being extreamly weaken'd by this; and the Conditions of the Gospel-Faith in Him alone, and Repentance thro Him only, overthrown.

Therefore, as God shew'd his Approbation of these *Jews* Refusal, to worship *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Image, by the Miracle he wrought in their Deliverance: So, I doubt not, but he has shew'd so many Wonders in Delivering this Nation so often, for its Constancy in the same Refusal; tho in all other respects, most unworthy of the least of His Mercies.

II. I come to Examine the Pretences of Religious Cruelty, not only as to these Extreams, but as to any Violence offer'd to our fellow Christians upon the account of Christianity; and to show, that this is proportionably unjust and unreasonable.

The Pretences of all Religious Cruelty may be reduc'd to these two; either to Promote Gods Glory, or our Neighbours Good; but this is not proper for either of these purposes:

1. Not proper to promote God's Glory: by this, I take to be meant, one of these two things; The improving that Notion of God which Men may have by the Light of Nature; or, The making his Re-

Reveal'd Will to be more readily embrac'd by them.

As to the firſt of theſe: If we conſider Mankind in the State of Nature, without any Improvement of his Reaſon, or Advantage of Revelation. We may ſuppoſe, That while they wandred about in a Wild and Savage Manner, they were not very ſolicitous about the Worſhip of God. But when Self-Preſervation began to be Alarm'd by ſome Evil which they ſuffer'd, it forc'd 'em to acknowledge ſome Superiour Being.

As Fear was the chief Cauſe of this, ſo their Worſhip was Cruel, and their Manners (which are always influenc'd by the Nature of Religion) Barbarous. But when they began to Settle into Societies, and to Converſe with one another; When in the leiſure of Peace and Plenty, they reflected upon the Firſt Cauſe of the Benefits which they enjoy'd; and from the Contemplation of God's Goodneſs in his Works, roſe gently to the Diſcovery of his Goodneſs in his Eſſence; then Love grew the Principle of their Glad Obedience. And accordingly their Worſhip was Bloodleſs and Chearful, and their Manners Innocent and Indearing.

So that the Improvement of Humane Nature conſiſts in the Notions of Goodneſs in the Divine, and Gods Glory was manifeſted to the World. Not only, by ſuch worthy Conceptions of Him,

but also, by the mild Influence which these Conceptions had upon mens Minds and Actions.

But if, when Men had got thus far by the Light of Nature, any one should have started up, and pretended to have offer'd Violence to his Neighbour; to have afflicted, tormented, nay murther'd him, by a particular Commission from God himself, and in order to his Glory; then Love must have given place to Fear immediately, and Humane Nature turn'd Wild and Savage again: And either have Renounc'd all Belief of a God; or imagin'd Him to have been so Dreadful a Being, and Worshipt Him in so Barbarous a manner, as would have been far worse: For as *Plutarch* says, *Would it not be more for the Honour of the Gods? For the* Scythians *and* Carthaginians, *who offer'd Men upon their Altars, to have deny'd their Being altogether? than to Teach, That they delighted in such Sacrifices? Had the* Titans *prevail'd against Heaven, and Usurp'd the Government of the World; What other* Victims *but these, would they have requir'd of us?* Such are the Sacrifices which every Rash Enthusiast offers; and so, much more, do some Zealots detract from Gods Glory than Atheism it self.

Plut. περὶ δεισιδαιμον.

But if in the next place, *Violence* is intended to promote the *Gospel.* How Contradictory and

and Abſurd is this! This is to Recommend Love by Hatred, Mercy by Cruelty, and Forgiveneſs by Deſtruction.

That which diſtinguiſhes the Goſpel ſo glorioufly, is its being ſo admirably diſpos'd to beget Love and Peace, Juſtice and Charity among all Men. Here Forgiveneſs is improv'd into Beneficence, and Humanity exalted into Charity: Here Injuries are return'd with Prayers, and Curſes with Bleſſings: Here all our Duty is ſumm'd up under thoſe two ſweet Commands, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf.* Love alone is the fulfilling of this Law; And this is made by our Bleſſed Saviour, the Particular Diſtinction of his Followers, *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are MY Diſciples, if ye love one another.* The *Phariſees* taught, That it was lawful to hate Enemies, and preferr'd the obſervation of the ſmalleſt Duties, before the works of Juſtice and Mercy. The *Cynicks* renoune'd all Humanity; the *Stoicks* reckon'd Compaſſion an Infirmity, and if they Reveng'd not Injuries, it was out of Pride, not Humility; becauſe they lookt upon it below their Affected Grandeur, to be *diſorder'd* by them; not becauſe they *forgave* them: All other Sects were deficient in this particular.

But

But Christianity improv'd Humane Nature into the likeness of the Divine; And therefore our Blessed Lords Disciples were to be distinguished from the whole World, by their *loving one another*. And what Examples of this did our Great Master leave us! How did he go about doing Good! Healing the Sick graciously! Instructing the Ignorant gently! and Reproving the Wicked calmly! And after innumerable Injuries of Contempt and Violence, with what Meekness and Patience did he *Die* for the Sins of the whole World. And after all this, shall men dare to impoverish, imprison, murther their Brethren, in the Name of this JESUS! Shall they in this Saving Name, which was us'd of Old, only to Heal Diseases, and Cast out Devils, Form so many Conspiracies, Execute so many Massacres, Spill the Blood of so many Thousands! as they have done in *Piedmont*, *Hungary*, *Germany*, *Ireland*, *England*! All the World over.

Alas! When I consider those Arts of Cruelty, those elaborate Tortures, and study'd Deaths, those Ruines of Cities, Subversions of Kingdoms, and Murthers of Princes, which have been done in this Blessed Name, and all this pretended officiously, for his Service, and the promoting of his Glory: I cannot but represent to my self the *Lamb of God*, the *Prince of Peace*,

Peace, turning away from such Spectacles of Horrour, saying, *Who hath required these things at your Hands? Ye know not what Spirit ye are of, the Son of Man did not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.*

This was the design of our Saviours Coming; the Spirit of Peace and Love is that which we ought to be of; and which is so sweetly diffus'd thro all the Gospel, and was so effectual in promoting it against the Wit of *Athens*; the Power of *Rome*; and the General Prejudice of the whole World. But if men, instead of this, will be guilty of such Cruelties upon the account of Christianity, this must be so far from recommending it, that it is enough to make the Name of Christ blasphem'd among the Gentiles; and to cause every one that suffers under it, or that beholds such Sufferings, to persist in their Errours more stubbornly, as will further appear, if we consider:

2. The other Pretence of Religious Cruelty, which is, to promote the Good of our Neighbour: But not only these Extreams of which we have been speaking, but all kinds of Zealous Violence, are improper for this purpose.

This is generally disguis'd under the specious Pretence of Zeal. But true Zeal ought first to be employ'd upon our selves. When men become Examples of Fervency in their Piety, and Morti-

Mortifications in their Obedience or Repentance, then they moſt effectually contribute both to Gods Glory, and their Neighbours Good. Zeal is as neceſſary to the life of Devotion, as the Natural Heat is to that of the body. But then it is apt to become Feveriſh, and diſturb the Brain. It often renders our own good Actions, haſty and imperfect, tho ſurprizing at firſt ſight: As Plants that are forc'd by artificial Heat, come before others indeed, but bring not with them their natural Smell or Taſte. But generally it affects to ſhew it ſelf at our Neighbours Coſt; it blazes outwards, like *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Furnace, and deſtroys whoever comes in its way, tho its own Friends.

But holy and innocent Zeal! innocent and therefore holy! ſhoots out its Flames directly towards Heaven, and caſts a Light upon all that are round it; but ſuch a Light as is for their Comfort and Direction; ſuch a Light as God Himſelf is, when he ſhines out upon the humble Penitent, in the reviving Glory of Goodneſs and Mercy; Not a devouring Flame; not a conſuming Fire.

The Promiſes, that, *He that ſaves a Soul from Death ſhall hide a multitude of Sins*; that, *He that turns many to Righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the Stars for ever and ever*; make many very earneſt to bring over others to their Opinions, and

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to use Violence to this purpose; but *No Man is crown'd except he strive lawfully:* It is not enough to be zealous in any matter, unless we observe those Rules and Conditions which God has prescrib'd to us. And if Men really sought their Neighbours Good, as fervently as they did their own, they would find, that Violence is not only against the whole Design of the Gospel (as has been shown;) but also against their own Design of convincing their Neighbour.

For Religion must be a free Consent of the Soul; and can be acceptable to God only as 'tis Voluntary. *He requires Truth in the inward parts*; and that we should *Love him with all our Hearts, with all our Minds*, &c. But how can this be without full Conviction; and how can full Conviction be wrought, but by gentle Usage, calm Reasoning, and good Example: The Will can never be forc'd to give a *sincere* Assent, after all the Violence that can be offer'd; But Reason upon the appearance of any Force, is apt to Contract it self, and prepare for Resistance; both because Truth may justly be suspected, if it comes in so Hostile a manner; as also, because it cannot have leisure to examine *What is Truth*, when the Business is grown to be *Self-preservation*.

Besides, All Errour, considering the Vanity of Mankind, is of a nice and tender Nature: It requires a great deal of Management and Address,

to make People own that they are in the Wrong, Eſpecially in matters of Religion. But if inſtead of this, Violence is offer'd, and mens Intereſt, Liberties or Lives, are any way touch'd by Perſecution; not only Conceitedneſs, but Anger and Revenge confirm the Errour, and make it ſink deeper in the ſullen Sufferer: And when People are once brought to ſuffer, this will rather *diſperſe* than *ſuppreſs* the Errour, (as ſome Stains ſpread the wider, the nearer they are held to the Fire.) For Conſtancy in Suffering gives Reputation to the Cauſe, whatever it is; becauſe every one can judge of Courage, Meekneſs and Patience, tho few of Truth; and Pity (in a Good-Natur'd Nation eſpecially) ſoftens the beholders into a liking of the Sufferer; and brings him by degrees, to Excuſing and Defending him; and at laſt, *inſenſibly*, to the Embracing his Opinions.

Therefore the utmoſt that we can expect from Force is an outward Compliance; and that either from timorous People; or from ſuch as will not prejudice their Intereſt for any Religion in the World; of which there are too many! Violence may extort perhaps, Confeſſion from the Mouth, but will not hinder Curſes, at the ſame time, in the Heart; it may fright People into *counterfeiting*, but not perſuade 'em into *believing*; and after all the Induſtrious Cruelty of *Inquiſitions* or *Dragoons*, there will be *Jews* in *Spain*, and *Proteſtants*

ſtants in *France*, as *Proſtrate* as any at the *Elevation*.

But one particular Reaſon againſt the Raſhneſs of Zealous Cruelty, or any General Violence, is, becauſe the *Good* ſhould not ſuffer with the *Evil*; this was a Conſideration of that Importance, that our Saviour left ample Inſtructions concerning it, 13 *Matth.* 29, 30. where he poſitively forbids the *gathering of the Tares*, *leſt they ſhould root up the Wheat alſo*; and his Orders in this matter are, that they ſhould *Let both grow together till the Harveſt. This* (as St. *Chryſ.* upon the place) *was to forbid Wars, Blood and Slaughter upon the account of Hereſie; for if People will take up Arms to murther Hereticks, many innocent Men muſt ſuffer with them.* This is ſo plain, that it toucht one of the Boldeſt Conſpirators in *this Days* Treaſon; and made him conſult his *Confeſſor* upon it: And tho the *Jeſuit* gave it againſt our Saviour; yet no *Proteſtant* ſure, can doubt which he ought to follow.

For theſe Reaſons, no Religious Cruelty; no Violence of Zeal is proper to promote Gods Glory, or our Neighbours Good: But on the contrary, Unreaſonable and Unjuſt.

But tho theſe are the uſual Pretences, yet the true Cauſes of all Extreams of this kind, are of another Nature. I ſhall inſtance in two or three, which may moſt immediately concern us.

I. The firſt is, the Pride and Haughtineſs of Power: there is no doubt but *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Fury was inflam'd to ſuch a height, to ſee his Decree ſlighted by none but theſe Three *Jews*, his Slaves, his Captives; he was concern'd for his *own Honour* as much as his Idols: the ſame Temper which makes men Peeviſh and Paſſionate when they cannot get the better in private Diſputes, breaks out into Perſecution, when it meets with Power: True Zeal is the fervency of Love, and therefore beneficial; but counterfeit Zeal is nothing *but the fervency of Pride, and therefore deſtructive.*

And there is no queſtion but *Diſdain* that ſo ſmall an Iſland as this, ſhould be able to *confute* and *oppoſe* 'em *ſo long*, has exaſperated 'em to ſuch a degree: For tho the *Cauſe of God*, and *Religion* is pretended, all the *Conſpiracies* againſt this Nation, have been owing chiefly, to the *Pride of Supremacy*, and the *Indignation of Infallibility.*

II. Another Reaſon of this is, the endeavouring to recommend our ſelves to Man, rather than God: 'Tis uſual for Men to engage in ſome Party, to further their Ambition, or Intereſt, and then ſomething extraordinary muſt be done, to ſhow their Fidelity to that Party. This is a very general Corruption, and a great Reaſon of that *Prejudice* and *Paſſion*, that *want of Charity* and *Union*,

or

or rather, of that increaſe of *Diviſion* and *Bitterneſs* among us. For ſince all Men cannot be of one Opinion; He that is eager to approve himſelf to ſome particular Number, muſt needs do it at the others coſt: Therefore tho the Service of God, and the Good of Mankind is pretended never ſo much; we may be aſſur'd, that whoever is Cruel and Barbarous for his *miſtaken Neighbours* ſake, for his *ſuffering Saviours* ſake, is ſo *only for his own ſake*, and that 'tis *ſome other God which he ſerves and worſhips*; beſides *the true God*.

III. The laſt Reaſon of this, which I ſhall mention at preſent, is, An Opinion that ſuch Violence is meritorious for the Expiation of former Sins. This is one of the ſtrongeſt ſupports of the *Supremacy*. For if a Prince is known to have been of a Vicious Life, and can be made ſenſible of this by his *Confeſſor*, 'tis but pointing him out ſuch or ſuch Hereticks, and *their Deſtruction*, ſhall be *his Pardon*; and inferiour Perſons are made uſe of to the ſame purpoſe, proportionably.

But is there any other Atonement for Sin than our Redeemers Sacrifice! Or ſhall Man make uſe of the Blood of Chriſtians and Subjects to this end, inſtead of Faith and Repentance? Alas! what Extreams may a miſguided Conſcience be driven into! and how dreadful

is

is Sovereign Power! when made uſe of to atone for its own Guilt, and whetted on by Superſtition and Revenge for this Purpoſe! Bleſſed be God! That we learn this, rather from others Sufferings than our own Experience!

Theſe are the true Cauſes of Religious Cruelty, and the barbarous effects of Zealous Violence, tho others are pretended: But there are lower degrees of it, upon the account of leſſer Differences, which are proportionably unwarrantable, and whoever perſecutes his Brother for Opinions, *not dangerous to Government, not deſtructive of good Manners, not detracting from the Divinity of our Saviour, or the Authority of Gods Word*, is *greatly miſtaken, and under Condemnation.*

That *Jeſus!* who died for us all, recommended us to one another, by the ſtricteſt Obligations of *Mutual Love*; and his Apoſtles enforc'd the ſame continually, commanding us, *to bear one anothers burthens, and to let our Moderation be Known unto all Men*; and unleſs *this mind be in us, which was*, ſo remarkably, *in Chriſt Jeſus*, I cannot ſee with what Confidence, we can contend for his Glory, or preſume to be call'd by his *Peaceful Name.*

But tho *Perſecution* is ſo faulty, and *Moderation* ſo commendable, they are not always preſently diſtinguiſh'd, being extreamly diſguis'd by Cunning and Hypocriſie, according as Men have

have occasion to raise Anger, or move Compassion.

Persecution is the Cry of all *Monstrous Opinions* when they first Crawl out into the World; if any thing is Vented, tho never so destructive to the *Fundamentals of Government*, or *Christianity*, it begins with an Invective against *Persecution*; and tho the whole Treatise has nothing but *Falshood* and *Insolence*, concludes with the Praise of *Moderation*.

Sometimes the just Condemnation of Criminals is call'd *Persecution*; sometimes the corrupt acquitting of 'em *Moderation*. Sometimes *Constancy* to the Plainest Articles of Faith, is reckon'd a Sign of a *Persecuting Spirit*; sometimes *Indifference* as to *Religion*, whether there be any such thing at all, an Argument of a *Moderate One*.

But if there is any such thing as *Religion*, *Indifference* must be an *Errour*, whenever that is *really* in danger. But *Constancy* to it can never be so, *if not injurious to our Neighbour*.

A good Man ought to believe *truly*, as he *professes*; and to act *steddily* as he *believes*: and yet he ought, at the same time, to have Charity towards others, who profess the same Faith, tho not exactly in the same *Manner*. Let our *Constancy* then be softned by our *Charity*; and let our *Charity* be supported by our *Constancy*; so

shall

ſhall our *Zeal* neither languiſh into *Indifferency*, nor fret into *Perſecution*; and ſo ſhall we be at the ſame time, *juſt* to our Neighbour, and *faithful* to our God.

I have been the more particular upon this Head, becauſe the Pretences or Miſtakes of Zeal and Religion, were not only the Occaſion of the Barbarous Conſpiracy detected ſo Providentially *this day*: but have been made uſe of too often, to the great miſery of this poor Nation.

III. The Third thing I Propos'd, was to compare the Greatneſs of the Deliverance mentioned in the Text, with our own. *God ſent his Angel, and deliver'd his Servants that truſted in him*: The great Reaſon of this here mention'd is becauſe they *truſted in God*. When the Tyrant threatned theſe Three *Jews* with ſo cruel and ſudden a Death, *v.* 15. with what undaunted Reſolution do they Reply immediately, *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful* (very ſolicitous) *to anſwer thee in this matter: If it be ſo, our God whom we ſerve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace, and he will deliver us out of thy hand, O King! But if not* (if his Wiſdom ſhall not think fitting to do ſo) *Be it known unto thee, O King! That we will not ſerve thy Gods, nor Worſhip the Golden Image which thou haſt ſet up.* There are few Inſtances of ſuch Conſtancy, ſuch entire Truſt in God as this was; and

and this *acknowledging of his Providence*, this *ſubmitting to his Will*, made God ſend his holy Angel, to Deliver his Faithful Servants in ſo miraculous a manner: But their and our Deliverance is to be meaſur'd beſt by the greatneſs of the Danger which they were Expos'd to; Bound Hand and Foot; Thrown into the midſt of a Fiery Furnace, whoſe Heat was ſo violent, as to ſlay thoſe who were deſign'd to be their Executioners; and yet had Power over nothing about 'em, but their Bonds, to reſtore 'em to their Liberty.

The Parallel may be drawn very like, between this and our own Caſe. The Deliverance was almoſt as Wonderful: They alone, who deſign'd our Deſtruction, periſh'd; and our Liberty, from their Bonds, grew greater than before. But *their* Cruelty far exceeded that of this Heathen Tyrant, becauſe ſo Baſe, ſo Treacherous, and extended not to Three Captives only; but to *The greateſt Aſſembly in the Chriſtian World.*

And here I am at a loſs how to expreſs my ſelf! for fear of ſeeming to fall into the *miſtaken Zeal* which I have condemn'd; or to want that *Charity* which I have endeavour'd ſo much to recommend. But alas! What words can be found to ſhew our *Charity*, when an Action is ſo very foul in its own Nature, that the bare mention of it, muſt look like Invective. Let they themſelves then, be Judges of the matter; Let us put it friendly, to any one of them, and ſee what they may be ſuppos'd to ſay, to Defend it, to Excuſe it, or to Evade it.

Cau they deny the matter of Fact? Were not the

Inſtruments of Death found ready? Did not the Wretch that was to give the Fatal Blow, Triumph in the Deſign? Did not many of them Die deſpetately, to prevent Publick Juſtice, and others Confeſs it? And can it after all this be Queſtion'd? Well would it be for them, if any one of the Miracles which they have boaſted of, for a Thouſand Years paſt; had a Quarter of this Evidence.

But perhaps they will ſay, That theſe were only a few Private Perſons, Mad-men and Enthuſiaſts, and therefore the particular Crimes of ſuch, ought not to be laid upon the Whole Body of that Communion.

I doubt not, but that there were many *then*, and are *now* of that *Perſwaſion*, which heartily abhor and deteſt ſuch Contrivances. But as to the Madneſs of theſe Men, or its being a *private Undertaking*. No Mad-man is intruſted with Treachery of ſuch Importance; no *Enthuſiaſt* can carry on ſuch a Series of Subtilty and Cunning; for tho ſuch People are the beſt Executioners, upon ſuch Occaſions; yet the Springs that move 'em muſt be of another kind, and did reach farther than was then diſcover'd, as was plain from the General Expectation among all the *Papiſts* abroad, *of ſome extraordinary Action in* England *about that time.*

The Maſſacre at *Paris* may perhaps, be call'd a Tumult at a Publick Solemnity, or allow'd to be a piece of *Cruelty of State*, or the *unjuſt revenge of an injur'd Prince*; to ſhift it off from the *Church of Rome*. But he that ſees the particulars of that *bloody Tranſaction*, Painted Triumphantly in *one of the Chief Rooms of the Vatican*,

Vatican, with Inscriptions upon each part, and the Admiral *Coligni* nam'd directly, cannot deny (be he never so partial) but that the Court of *Rome*, highly approves, and encourages such Tragedies, if they are not contriv'd or manag'd there.

But again, it may be said, That tho this Fact was true, yet 'tis the part of *Charity*, *to make the best of Errours*, and not to *aggravate* 'em, and *inflame* Revenge. I grant this, where the *Evidence* is *doubtful*, or where there is *Repentance*; But where there is *neither* of these, Enormous Crimes are to be made Publick, not *to inflame Revenge*, but to *awaken Caution*. Besides, this is necessary to the *Fulness of our Praise*; How can we give God Thanks without we Know the greatness of the Mercy receiv'd; or how can that be known, without laying open the *Greatness of the Danger* from which he has deliver'd us? Or, how should this be done? without shewing the *bloodiness of their Cruelty*, and the *baseness of their Treachery*, that were Engag'd in it.

To Soften and Disguise such an Action, to *make the best* of *such a Wickedness*, is to make *the worst of Gods Goodness*. Yet notwithstanding these Considerations, Let 'em but acknowledge the Crime, let 'em but own, *That several* Jesuits *and other* Papists, *had contriv'd and prepar'd to murther their King, their Princes, their Nobles, and many Hundred of the Chief of the Gentry, of their own Country, in a moment, Upon the Pretence of the Christian Religion*. Let 'em, I say, but Confess this *plain* and *impartial Truth*, and then let the Sophistry of their *Jesuits*, and the Zeal of all their other *Orders*, *make the best of it*, as much as they please. But

But let us turn away our Eyes from these *frightful* Objects to those more delightful; let us leave the *Cruelty of Man*, to *contemplate* and *adore the Mercy of God.*

We have seen for what Reason we were expos'd to such *Danger*; we have examin'd the *Pretences of Religious Cruelty*, and shown the *Injustice* and *Unreasonableness* of it, and we have consider'd the Greatness of our Deliverance: What remains now! but to offer up our Praise and Thanksgiving; that *Sacrifice* so delightful to Man, and so Acceptable to God, for that *He sent his Angel, and deliver'd his Servants.*

Blessed then be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for Preserving the *Church of this Nation*, from the several Attempts of all its Adversaries; particularly, that of *This Day*, to be in after Ages, the *Ornament and Defence of the Reformation.*

Blessed be the Guardian Providence of these Kingdoms, which has preserv'd the *Excellent Constitution of Parliaments*, as the *happy Mean*, between the *Extreams* of *Liberty* and *Power*, as the *Security* of our *Rights* as *Englishmen*; and of our *Religion* as *Christians.* For had this been aboliſh'd in the Destruction design'd, as on this Day, both had been lost for ever.

For *Rome* is *Infallible* in *Temporals* as well as *Spirituals*; *Arbitrary Power* is *Civil Infallibility*, as *Arbitrary Doctrine* is *Ecclesiastical.*

Blessed then, Ever-blessed be the Watchful Goodness of our God! O may the Mercies of this Happy Day, (which have receiv'd so vast an increase of late!) Spread by degrees through all our Calendar! and every moment of time be fatal to such a Cause.

To conclude, May the frequent Deliverances which we have had, increase *Our Trust in God*; and at length, influence our Actions by a *Practical Gratitude.* May the Dangers we are still in from the *same People*, increase our *Union*; and make us more *constant* to our Holy Religion; and more exact in our Obedience to our God: Remembring always, That the chief End of this, and all our other Deliverances, was *That we should not Serve nor Worship any God, except our own God.*

FINIS.